

Laclede County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Small Farm Opportunities In the Ozarks

By Pam Cornelius, NRCS Resource Conservationist

If you could change from your current job to the job of your dreams, what would it be? For many, it might involve earning at least part of your income from some type of farming enterprise and being in the outdoors. Since the days of Mother Earth magazine in the 1970's, there have been urban Americans that dream of getting back to the land. Most people with this dream in the back of their minds work many years, save up, and buy a small rural acreage with this intention.

Quite a few buy anywhere from 10 to 40 acres, then consider how to make it "pay for itself." In reality, this may be getting the cart before the horse. The better option might be to narrow down the list of agriculture related enterprises that interest you and really research these. Then, once you decide on the best fit for you, begin looking for a farm. Sometimes this is not an option however because you have inherited a piece of property.

So, what are some of the options for small farm operations in the Ozarks? Here is only a partial list with some comments:

Tree farming-many years until harvest

Smaller livestock- goats, sheep, small-breed cattle

Truck farming- locally grown vegetables

High Tunnels- unheated "hoop-houses" for extending the growing season

Flower & Herb growing- a passion for plants helps

Agro-tourism- must be located near your target customers

Fish farming- lots of knowledge to start out with, high cost to start

Mushrooms- good forestry sideline

Exotic breeds- research & animal handling experience a plus

Textile Art, Wool- sources for raw materials or raise your own animals

Fruit Trees- good source of seasonal income

(cont.)

Small Farm Opportunities In the Ozarks (cont.)

Due to the recent health scares involving foods on a National-level, locally grown produce has become more important to the public, whether it is totally organic or not. Over the last few years, many in Missouri have taken advantage of the High Tunnel cost-share program in EQIP, a program administered by NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service). More information about these greenhouse-like structures can be found at: www.hightunnels.org or at your local USDA Service Center.

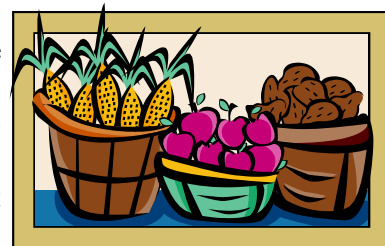
Once you know what aspect of small farming you want to try, what are some other questions you need to ask yourself? A short list of these could include- water quantity & quality for the operation, soils, distances to target customers, current land use, power availability to the site, experience, machinery needs, and labor. Even with a smaller operation, there are still only four basic factors of production: land, labor, capital, and management. On a small farm, you are substituting land and capital for management and labor. In other words, you have to have some great ideas for your product and work really, really hard to make that profit margin. You may have decided that it is going to be fun to get back to your agricultural roots but does your labor pool (your family) feel the same way?

So, how are some small farming enterprises succeeding in these tough economic times? Most are diversified- they are growing a number of products. They work with nature, not against it. They grow something that works well in their particular location & climate. More direct contact with their customers- either on-site or at local farmers markets. They make their own decisions & are passionate about what they are doing. If you don't have a passion for what you are doing, you will probably not succeed at it.

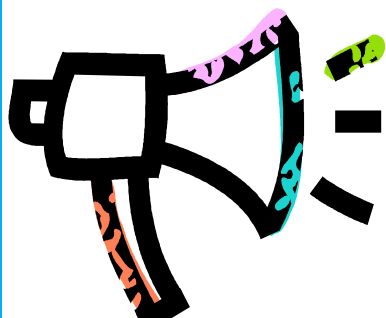
Even though there is a lot of work and commitment involved in these ventures, most people talk about the benefits that you can't measure in dollars. Some of these include the rural lifestyle, good family environment, and reduced stress.

In my own family, we operated a greenhouse for a few years while both my husband and I worked full-time. We would have people come look inside it and say "Oh look at all the pretty plants, I think I would like to be in the greenhouse business!" After they would leave I would think, yes, you might think so, but would you enjoy planting tiny tomato seeds in starter packs until 10 p.m. in February? I also think back to the Ratite (emu, ostriches, & rheas) craze promoted for small farms a few years back. With no consumer market established and no approved facilities to process them in, the fad was quickly over.

Making a portion of your income in some agri-business venture can be very rewarding and actually fun. Your best bet might be to get a mentor to guide you and try helping them out for one growing season. If you still like the business then, it may really be the one for you. Just remember the old saying though, "If it was easy (and profitable too), everyone would be doing it." Now get out there and get your hands dirty!



Calling All Vendors....



UPDATING our Vendors list. If you offer a service, such as fence building or excavation or have products for sale, such as concrete freeze proof tanks, please bring in your business card and/ or flyer to be added to our list. We do not promote any company, but we do offer the list to our landowners who are interested.

Women in Ag Conference

Make plans now to attend the Women in Ag conference scheduled for September 10-12th in Chillicothe, MO. Brochures available in our office.

Recycle, reuse, reduce

conserve

SAVE

April 22, 2012

PROTECT

TREASURE

Preserve

How did you celebrate Earth Day?

April 22nd marked the 42nd anniversary of Earth Day. This day set aside as a “Teach In” to explain the importance of conservation began on April 22, 1970.

It is a good day to consider what new practices that you can begin in your household or farming operation as an act of conservation. This last year my family began recycling. We have always recycled to

some extent, but we start separating everything that could be

reused. We were amazed at the amount of recycling we have every week. Even small steps count. Try “going paperless” with some of your bills. Can you receive your billing statement as an e-mail? Or perhaps you could have one night a week “Technology Free”, no TV, computer, phone. Use this time to connect with family, play games, read together, or just talk.

A positive way to celebrate Earth Day, everyday, is to plant a tree.

The ice storm of 2007 and the recent tornado season has reinforced the idea of good tree selection and placement is needed to avoid future problems. Many individuals have planted the Bradford Pear tree which grows quickly and is an aesthetically pleasing landscape tree. But the single trunk with a number of off shooting branches proves to be a tree that does not withstand ice or wind well. Another problem associated with this ornamental pear trees is that they are cross pollinating with other pear tree species and producing a wild callery pears. Being very prolific, these trees are spreading across the countryside from urban areas.

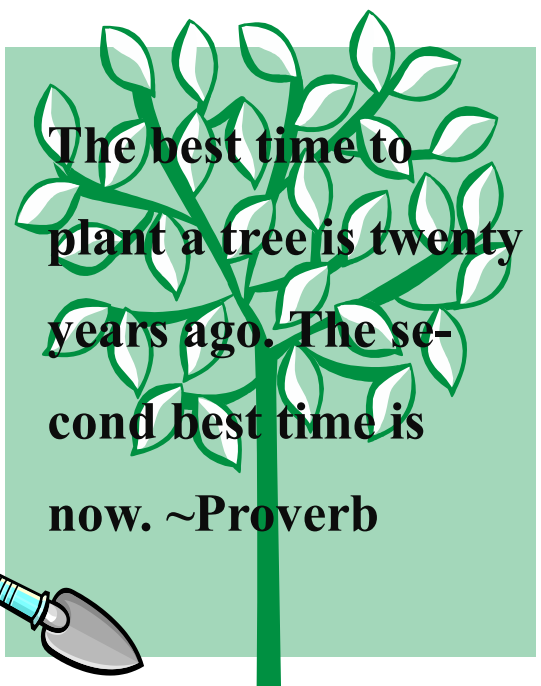
Advanced planning will help you in selecting the best variety of tree. Questions to take into consideration include, “What is the size of the tree when mature?”, “What future plans to you have for the area?”, “Does this tree produce fruit or seeds?”, “Have we avoided planting near waterlines and overhead power lines?”. By planting trees deciduous trees on the south, east and west sides of your home, you will have shade in the summer and can warm your home from the sunshine in the fall and winter.

Go to:

<http://extension.missouri.edu/extensioninfonet/article.asp?id=1604> and/or

<http://cmg.colostate.edu/gardennotes/631.pdf> for advice.

A google search for Proper Tree Placement brings up several options.



Temple Grandin the featured speaker at Spring Forage Conference

Renowned livestock handling expert and author of several books both on the subjects of animal and human interactions and autism, Temple Grandin was the keynote speaker at the Annual Spring Forage Conference held in Springfield, MO on February 28th. Ms. Grandin addressed the dinner crowd with her presentation on “Thinking with Way Animals Do”. Her research on this topic has lead her to design handling facilities for the meat packing industry where more than half of the cattle in the United States and Canada are processed.

Ms. Grandin’s presentation included common sense ideas, such as keeping chutes clear from distractions such as people standing on the sidelines within the cattle’s view. She added that a curved shoot limited the line of vision and worked better for ease of cattle movement.

Nearly 700 people attended the conference to hear 13 speakers presenting topics ranging from “Managing the Spring Flush” to “The Role of Forages in the Changing Beef Industry” to “Stocker Cattle Performance and Pasture Costs”. Attendees chose from four breakout periods made up of four concurrent session lasting approximately 45 minutes. More than 30 vendor from across the state had information available about their products for participants.

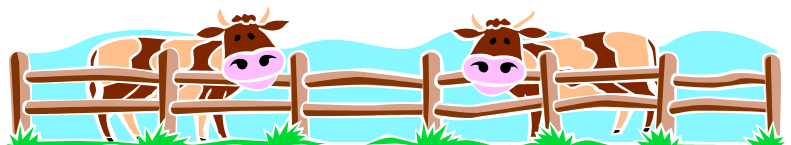
Next year’s conference will be held in conjunction with Heart of America Grazing Conference. Mark you calendars for February 25 and 26, 2013. I would highly recommend saving the date as this conference provides lots of information for your education dollars.

Regional Grazing School List Available

One of the most popular practices for many Soil and Water Conservation Districts, including Laclede, is the Planned or Rotational Grazing System. This practice has been divided up into smaller sub-practices to allow the landowner to complete each of the components (water development, water distribution, fencing, lime and seed) without keeping your working capital tied up until the entire system is completed.

In order to participate in the Planned or Rotational Grazing System Practice, you must first attend an approved Grazing School. Schools are now held regionally and have a limited number of seats available. For a complete list of schools go to: <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mfgc/schools.htm>.

Schools vary from number of days to cost. Review the list thoroughly to find one that works best for you. Remember to bring your grazing certificate to the office to be placed in your file.



State Conservationist visits Laclede County Office

State Conservationist J. R. Flores visited the Lebanon Field Office on March 16th. Escorted by Area Conservationist Montie Hawks, Mr. JR Flores took a tour of some of the offices within the Southwestern part of the state in NRCS Area 4. Stopping by the Laclede County office, Mr. Flores discussed county resource concerns with NRCS and SWCD staff.



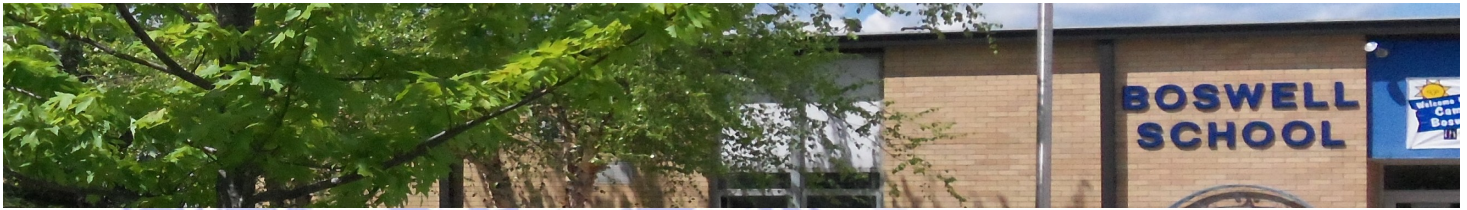
From Left to right: Resource Conservationist Alan Garton, Resource Conservationist Pam Cornelius, District Program Specialist II Mary Jo Tannehill, State Conservationist J.R. Flores, Farm Service Agency County Executive Director Darrel McCann, Area Conservationist Montie Hawks, and District Conservationist Dan Silberberg.

Energize Missouri Agriculture

The Missouri Dept. of Agriculture is offering energy audits at NO COST for Missouri farmers. This audit will help to identify energy savings in your farming operation. The energy consultant will also find areas of our operation that could benefit from efficiency upgrades. **Funding and participation is limited.** For more information on this program call the program hotline at (800)-732-1399.



www.EnergizeMissouri.org



The District is pleased to partner with Boswell 5th graders on articles relating to Natural Resources. Our thanks go out to Ms. Christina Mackey and Ms. Courtney Starnes for their assistance. And a big thanks to student CJ Ranfeld and Ben Arl for their hard work in interviewing and writing the article.

Earth Day

By: CJ Ranfeld and Ben Arl

Students of Courtney Starnes Class at Boswell Elementary

Why do we celebrate Earth Day some might ask? Simple! We celebrate Earth Day as a reminder that we need to take care of the Earth. We interviewed Boswell Elementary's counselors Mrs. Pope and Mr. Alison to see what they think about Earth Day. They said that we celebrate Earth Day so we can take time to appreciate and take care of our Earth. They also said that Earth Day is very important, and that if we didn't take care of Earth, there would be pollution. Air pollution, water pollution, and land pollution. Air pollution would cause us to be unable for us to breathe, and we would die. Water pollution would affect our drinking water. It would also pollute our fish that swim in the water. And land pollution would cause all the plants and animals to die out, so there for we wouldn't have any food to eat, so basically it's kind of like a chain reaction. And last, but certainly not least they said that we depend on Earth's natural resources by the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

I'm here today with Brett Dudenhoeffer. Brett says he recycles and reuses things to celebrate Earth Day. He feels that others should celebrate Earth Day, too, because he thinks that others should appreciate the Earth too. He also helps his environment by recycling paper, plastic, and aluminum. He even has his own compost pile!

I'm interviewing the famous Mrs. Hyde, Boswell Elementary's very own principal! She says that for Earth Day she takes her kids out to pick flowers and picks up trash. She also feel that people are not appreciating what God has created for us, and that we should admire all he has done for us. Give it up for Mrs. Hyde!!!



Ms. Christina Mackey's class celebrated Earth Day by making Grass heads. Earth Day was celebrated with a smile. Photos by CJ Ranfeld.



Hieroglyphics Decoder

Hieroglyphics—a picture writing system used by the Egyptians



T

Y

F

B

H

A

R

V



D

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N



Water Riddles:

What lives in the winter, dies in the summer and grows with its root upward?

What three letters mean stiff water?

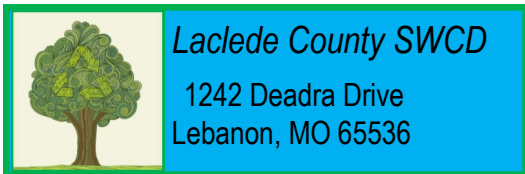
What kind of bank needs no money?

What runs and has no feet, roars but has no mouth?

What runs but never gets tired?

Find the answers to these riddles and much more at http://www.smcmua.org/riddle_answers.htm

Answer to the Hieroglyphics Decoder is: Celebrate Earth Day! Conservation benefits everyone!



Address Change: if you have a change of address or wish to be removed from the mailing list please call 417-532-6305, Ext101 or 1 800 203-4467, Ext. 101 to notify us of your change.

<p><u>BOARD OF SUPERVISORS</u></p> <p>Steve Stratton.....Chairman</p> <p>Bill Shields..... Vice-Chairman</p> <p>Dean Andersen.....Treasurer</p> <p>Adam Hoffman.....Member</p> <p>James Thompson..... Secretary</p> <p><u>DISTRICT PERSONNEL</u></p> <p>Mary Jo Tannehill..... District Manager</p> <p>Jimmie Lee Haines, Jr..... District Technician</p> <p><u>NRCS</u></p> <p>Daniel Silberberg..... District Conservationist</p> <p>Pam Cornelius..... Resource Conservationist</p> <p>Alan Garton..... Resource Conservationist</p>	<p><u>District Phone Numbers</u></p> <p>Office: 1-417- 532-6305, 1- 800- 203-4467</p> <p>Fax: 1-417- 533-3689</p> <p>Extensions:</p> <p>Mary Jo - 101 Jimmie - 118</p> <p>Pam - 112 Alan - 111</p>
	<p><u>District Rentals</u></p> <p>2- No-till Drills—located at Calton’s Machinery in Morgan</p> <p><u>District Loaners</u> Lebanon: Soil probe, Augur, Spinning Jenny</p>

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